ENVIRONICS RESEARCH GROUP

Market Analysis of the Teacher Workforce

LEARNINGS FROM RESEARCH

Prepared for: Alberta Education

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the research findings flowing from the Market Analysis of the Teacher Workforce in Alberta, a broad, Alberta-focused assessment and analysis of the challenges and opportunities related to teacher attraction and retention in the province.

This major research undertaking was commissioned by Alberta Education in response to a forecast teacher supply shortage facing the province. The situation was described in the Alberta Education RFP as follows:

> *Alberta school authorities including public, separate, private, charter, and Francophone could soon be facing significant challenges in their ability to recruit sufficient numbers of qualified individuals to careers in teaching, educational leadership, and related careers within the kindergarten to grade 12 education sector.*
>
> *Alberta Education forecasts show that student populations are rising in Alberta schools, and provincial data indicate that Alberta may need as many as 1,500 additional teachers by 2013.*
>
> *Alberta Education is working with an education based stakeholder "Working Committee" comprised of representatives from the Alberta School Boards Association, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Councils Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents and the Alberta Association of Deans of Education to develop strategies to both attract and retain competent, skilled individuals to careers in education.*

Environics Research and Stormy Lake Consulting developed and implemented the following multi-step research plan for this study.

- Background Review: a thorough review of available research, strategy, and policy papers as well as a custom analysis of Environics' social values data specifically to identify the social values of teachers in Alberta, relative to other major societal groups.
- School Board Self-Assessment: a brief survey of Alberta school boards to assess their workforce issues and strategies.
- In-depth, individual interviews: a series of 56 in-depth individual interviews to gather detailed information from superintendants (8), school board HR representatives (6), principals, teachers (6 each from early-career, mid-career and recently retired/left the profession) and students (six in Education programs, and six in other post-secondary with education intent).

- Teacher and Principal survey: a random, representative survey of more than 1,200 ATA members gathered information about their career paths and satisfaction levels, among other things.
- Public and parent input was gathered through a series of three regional school council forums and a public opinion survey.
- A summary report on the Background Information Review was submitted (under separate cover) in February 2010.

A separate Action Report provides short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations for action.

THE SOCIAL VALUES OF ALBERTA TEACHERS

In this section we present the distinguishing social values of Alberta teachers, drawing upon analysis of data from Environics' proprietary Social Values Monitor.

Introduction to Social Values. The Environics Social Values system is a set of research tools used to identify motivations and relationships to brands, products, services, causes, policies and positions. Social values in this context are defined as deep beliefs or broad orientations toward fundamental aspects of living in the world. Social values are:

- A person's mental posture or fundamental world view that sets the context in which they react to situations, events, opportunities and challenges
- Shaped by one's upbringing, family life, schooling, community and cultural influences
- Can evolve slowly over time through education and life experiences

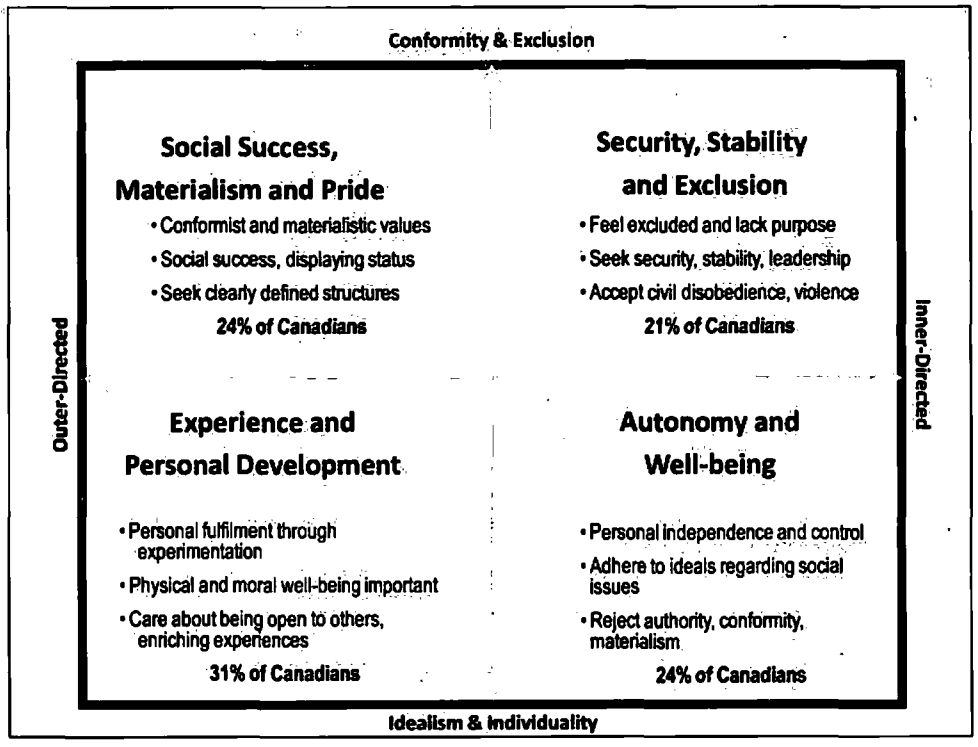
A person's deeply-held values set the context for his or her orientation to the world, lifestyle and the marketplace. Understanding the attitudinal and value similarities and differences of Canadians improves the ability to communicate with relevant segments of the population. Along with demographics, and other characteristics, social values set the context in which Canadians form attitudes and opinions as they relate to public policy, brand or product decisions, or other forms of public communication.

The Environics system tracks a range of social values, including:

- Confidence and adaptability;
- Work goals, motivations;
- Social relations, family/friends;
- Tradition, Social liberalism;
- Personal growth;
- Ethics;
- Health, appearance; and
- Consumer motivations.

Understanding the Social Values Map. The following map summarizes the placement of Canadians across our social values map. The vertical axis of the map runs from conformist values,

such as feelings of social exclusion, aimlessness, along with intolerance and an acceptance of, or even an attraction to, violence at the top, to individualism and idealism, such as subscribing to social ideals based on respect for individuals and their diversity, at the bottom. The horizontal axis runs from outer-directedness, which refers to values relating to self-actualization through success and/or personal development, on the left, to inner-directedness and self-acceptance on the right.


Conformity & Exclusion
Social Success, Materialism and Pride
• Conformist and materialistic values
• Social success, displaying status
• Seek clearly defined structures
24% of Canadians
Security, Stability and Exclusion
• Feel excluded and lack purpose
• Seek security, stability, leadership
• Accept civil disobedience, violence
21% of Canadians
Experience and Personal Development
• Personal fulfilment through experimentation
• Physical and moral well-being important
• Care about being open to others, enriching experiences
31% of Canadians
Autonomy and Well-being
• Personal independence and control
• Adhere to ideals regarding social issues
• Reject authority, conformity, materialism
24% of Canadians
Outer-Directed
Inner-Directed
Idealism & Individuality

When looking across the map, approximately one-quarter of Canadians are found in the top-left quadrant, where social success, materialism and pride are dominant values. Prevalent here are conformist and materialistic values, such as social success, displays of status, and seeking clearly defined structures.

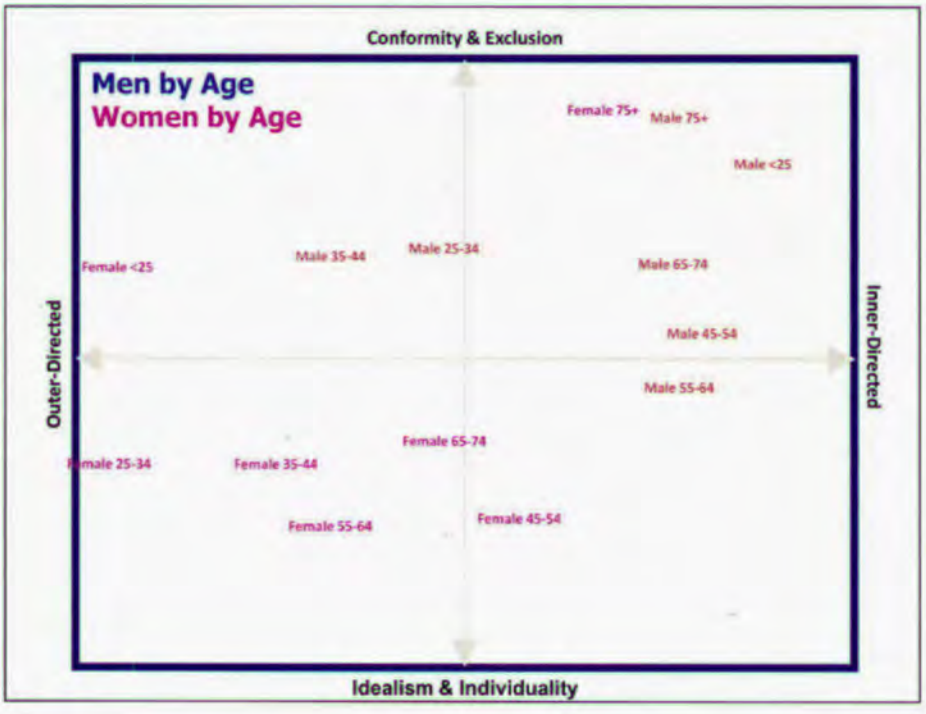
About one in five Canadians are found at the top-right of the social values map, where conservative values and feelings of exclusion are strong. Canadians located in this quadrant tend to feel excluded and lack purpose; they seek security, stability, leadership, and some are accepting of civil disobedience, and may be attracted to violence.

In the bottom right quadrant are the approximately one quarter of Canadians who value autonomy and well-being. The individuals in this group value personal independence and control, adhere to ideals regarding social issues, and tend to reject authority, conformity and conspicuous consumption.

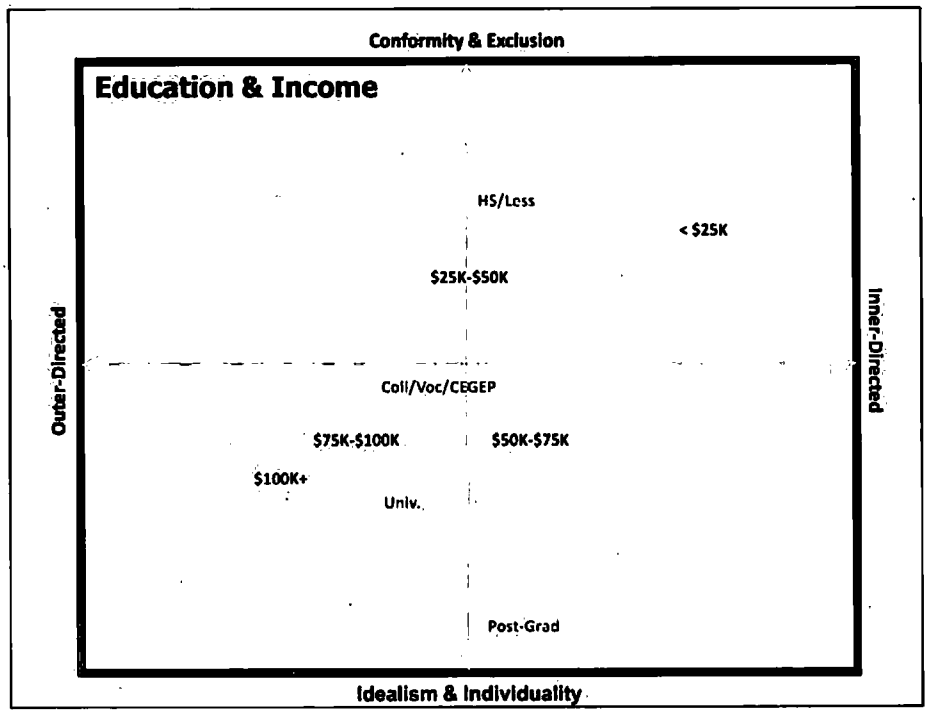
At the bottom left of the map are about three in ten Canadians who value experiences and personal development. These Canadians are seeking personal fulfilment through experimentation; they value physical and moral well-being, and care about being open to others, and having enriching experiences.

General Orientations of Canadians. Using social values maps, we are able to locate key segments of Canadians and, thus, gain insight into their value orientations.

Looking at age and gender, as depicted on the following social values map, we see that men, typically, are further up the map than women and further to the right and this regardless of age. This indicates that men are typically more concerned with stability, conformity and traditional values. Women on the other hand, with the exception of those aged 75 years and older, tend to be found further down the map, and to the left of men. This placement reflects the fact that women typically are more open to and interested in experiences and personal development than men. Canadian youth, are generally found toward the top of the map, with men to the right and women to the left. Also, more educated youth would be further down the map relative to less educated youth. Generally speaking, youth can be considered as rebelling against their parents who are found further down the map.



Turning to education and income levels, the following map illustrates how Canadians move down the map from top to bottom as their education levels increase and how the values orientations move from top-right to bottom-left as income levels increase.

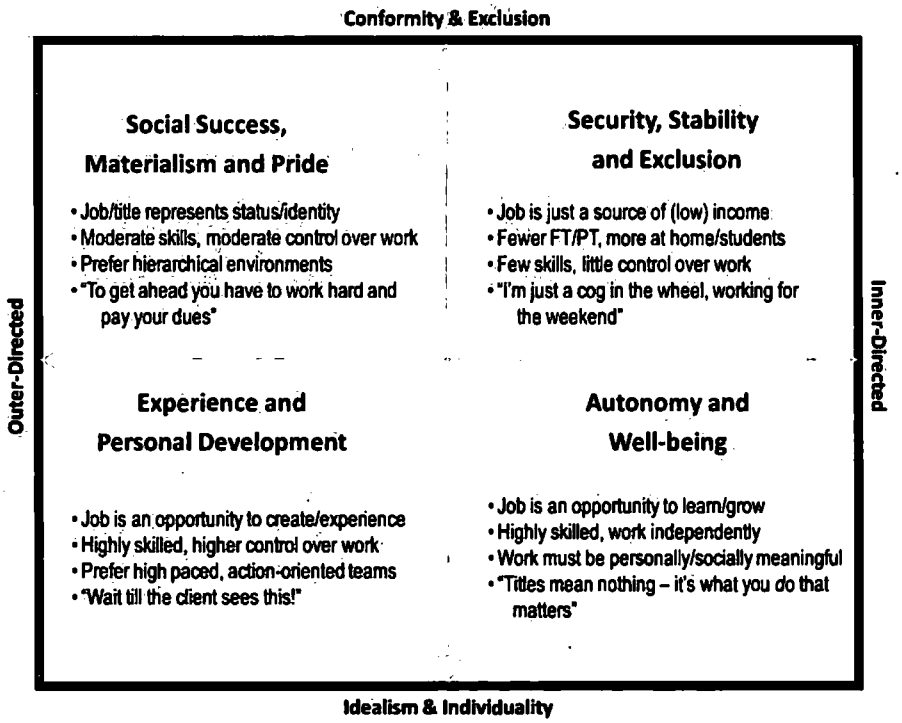


Social values also effectively distinguish between occupational groupings and provide insight into the type of employment relationships different groups of Canadians seek.

Social Values and Employment. The preceding map illustrates the social values location of Canadians employed in a variety of occupational sectors. Teachers and other educators are found near the bottom of the map, in the right hand quadrant.

The map also illustrates that teachers are located in reasonable (values) proximity to individuals employed in fields such as the arts, and information and culture, as well government and health services and science/R&D. Slightly further from teachers, but still in the bottom half of the map, are individuals employed in legal, administrative, and IT/computer fields.

As shown in the following graphic, Canadians located in the lower right quadrant of the values map generally consider a job to be an opportunity to learn and grow, and consider it important that their work be personally and/or socially meaningful. Employees in this quadrant also typically value their independence.


Conformity & Exclusion
Social Success, Materialism and Pride
• Job/title represents status/identity
• Moderate skills, moderate control over work
• Prefer hierarchical environments
• "To get ahead you have to work hard and pay your dues"
Security, Stability and Exclusion
• Job is just a source of (low) income
• Fewer FT/PT, more at home/students
• Few skills, little control over work
• "I'm just a cog in the wheel, working for the weekend"
Outer-Directed
Inner-Directed
Experience and Personal Development
• Job is an opportunity to create/experience
• Highly skilled, higher control over work
• Prefer high paced, action-oriented teams
• "Wait till the client sees this!"
Autonomy and Well-being
• Job is an opportunity to learn/grow
• Highly skilled, work independently
• Work must be personally/socially meaningful
• "Titles mean nothing – it's what you do that matters"
Idealism & Individuality

Teachers' Values. When comparing teachers to other occupational groups, a range of distinguishing characteristics are evident.

First, teachers demonstrate a strong need to invest their professional lives with meaning and to find personal fulfilment through their work. They also demonstrate a need to feel that their work is useful to others and has social value. In addition, teachers tend to invest their entire lives with meaning or goals, and to regularly reflect on these goals.

Teachers also express a strong need for frank, warm and spontaneous relationships with people as well as a need for communication and deep, affective exchanges with others. Teachers demonstrate this openness to other people in a number of ways: they are generally believers in equality of the sexes; they recognize a masculine and a feminine side to their personalities; believe they can easily get to know and have meaningful exchanges with people who are much younger (or older) than they are; and they believe other cultures have a lot to offer and are inclined to incorporate cultural influences into their own lives.

Educators have a tendency to feel like citizens of the world (or global village) more so than feeling like a citizen only of their own country. They also enjoy a sense of being "plugged in" to what is happening in other countries.

Teachers also demonstrate a tendency to believe that not everything is predetermined, that one can influence the course of events. This is expressed through the desire to control various aspects of one's daily life, even those determined by forces over which we seem to have little control. This includes the desire to participate in the decision-making affecting their lives – to be informed, consulted, and involved.

Finally, teachers demonstrate a tendency to analyze and examine their actions and those of others, rather than to be judgemental. They share an interest in understanding life rather than taking sides.

Male and Female, Urban and Rural Teachers

Other research conducted for this project suggested that understanding the value differences between male and female teachers and between teachers in urban and rural areas would also be instructive. The following key differences emerged from those analyses.

The values of teachers relating to the need and affinity for relationships are much stronger among female teachers than male and among those in urban settings compared to rural areas.

Similarly, the tendency of teachers to analyze and examine situations and actions, rather than to judge, is also much stronger among female teachers and teachers in urban areas.

Male teachers also differ in that they are more comfortable with hierarchy in organizations, whereas teachers generally, and female teachers in particular, tend to prefer flat organizations and peer-to-peer relations.

Rural teachers differ from those in urban areas in feeling, on average, less adaptable to the complexities of modern life, and in having strong feelings of community involvement. Rural teachers are also less likely than others to reject authority and are more inclined toward social responsibility. Teachers in rural areas also demonstrate a strong attraction to nature

Male teachers have a much stronger enthusiasm for technology than female teachers and, on average, rural teachers have a lower enthusiasm for technology than their urban counterparts.

Human Resources Profile

The following is a brief employment and career profile of individuals found in the Autonomy and Well-Being (lower, right) quadrant of the Canadian social values map, where teachers are found.

- Finding the perfect job is a must – preferably helping others in society
- Seeks like-minded, "idealistic" peers who are willing to work for their goals
- Like compensation to be fair, but the real reward is the experience from the work performed
- Non-financial benefits such as training, sabbaticals, and conferences are important
- Prefer organizations where their voice can be heard
- Need to feel appreciated and recognized
- Are frustrated in regimented, assembly line type jobs with little autonomy
- Will go the extra mile in work that is empowering and meaningful
- Constantly seeking new growth and development opportunities
- Ideal mentors for new employees

SCHOOL BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY

On March 1, 2010, all members of the College of Alberta School Superintendants were sent an invitation to this survey. The survey covered topics related to teacher recruitment and retention and the types of challenges Alberta school boards face. The invitation suggested that the survey be completed by the person in each board best suited to respond.

By March 15 when the survey was closed, 34 responses were received, out of a total of 66 invitees. Of the 34 completed surveys, 10 were from boards that self-described as urban, with 24 from rural areas. The results were also analyzed by the size of board as indicated by the number of teachers employed: 13 of the participating boards employ 230 teachers or less; 11 boards employ between 231 and 399 teachers; and another 10 employee 400 or more teachers.

Recruitment – Current Situation

The survey began by asking participants to rate their board's overall current efforts at recruiting needed teaching talent. Of the 34 participants, four in ten (38%) consider their recruitment to be very successful while six in ten (59%) rate their recruitment as somewhat successful. Only 1 participant self-reported their board's recruitment as not very successful. Among urban boards, 70% consider their recruitment to be very successful, whereas 75% of rural boards rate this as somewhat successful. The one not very successful response was also from a small rural board.

In a follow-up question, boards were asked the reasons for their ratings, in an open-ended question. The most common positive responses are that things are going well (24%) or that a career fair was helpful (6%). The reasons why boards rate themselves as less than very successful include: geographic location (32%, 38% rural v. 20% urban); difficulty recruiting francophone teachers (24%, 30% rural v. 10% urban); and difficulty recruiting CTS teachers (12%, all rural).

Next, participants were asked to rate their boards' success at recruiting in each of the following specific areas.

	Very successful	Somewhat successful	Not very successful	Not at all successful	Not applicable
Early learning education	65%	29%	3%		3%
ESL teachers	9%	44%	5%	-	32%
Francophone/French immersion teachers	3%	44%	24%	3%	27%
Second language teachers	6%	65%	18%	3%	9%
Teachers of Aboriginal ancestry	-	18%	21%	38%	24%
Visible minority teachers	6%	29%	18%	18%	29%
Teachers for rural/remote/ northern locations	6%	41%	24%	-	29%

In all but two instances, the proportion responding not very or not at all successful is greater among rural and small school boards than among urban and larger school boards. The exception is the recruitment of Aboriginal teachers which is reported to be more challenging for urban boards, although this is also one of the more challenging areas for all boards.

Recruitment – Mid-Term Prospects and Challenges

Participants were also asked if they expect teacher recruitment to become a major challenge over the coming three to five years. Three-quarters of participants agree, including 35% who strongly agree, and between seven and eight in ten agree across urban and rural schools and across the range of school sizes.

Participating school boards were also asked how much of a challenge each of the following are, now and three to five years from now.

	Currently		Three to five years from now	
	Major Challenge	Minor	Major Challenge	Minor
Staffing of First Nations, Inuit and Metis teachers	50%	27%	47%	29%
Staffing ESL teachers	12%	59%	21%	47%
Staffing other second language positions	38%	47%	50%	35%
Staffing of special education teachers	24%	62%	35%	53%
Staffing of math and science positions	44%	41%	56%	35%
Staffing for early learning education positions	3%	47%	15%	35%

These results suggest that the major staffing challenges currently and in the mid-term are in three areas: First Nations, Inuit, and Metis teachers; math and science specialist; and other (than English) second language teachers. Special education is also expected to be a major staffing challenge for one-third of boards in three to five years time.

Attrition and Retention Challenges

Participants were also asked to rate their challenges in the following teacher retention areas, now and three to five years out.

	Currently		Three to five years from now	
	Major Challenge	Minor	Major Challenge	Minor
Early career teacher attrition	6%	47%	15%	36%
Mid career teacher attrition	3%	44%	12%	35%
Early retirement	15%	32%	21%	44%
Retirement	6%	65%	21%	59%
Attrition overall	12%	44%	21%	38%

For the most part, attrition and retirement are not seen as major challenges currently although retirement and attrition overall are forecast to be major problems for about one in five boards three to five years out. Looking at the combined major and minor challenge responses, retirement is also the leading challenge facing boards.

Current Practices

The survey included a few questions to assess current practice in a range of areas potentially related to teacher attraction and retention.

When asked how supportive the principals and school leadership in the boards are of new teachers, 70% rate them as very supportive, although this proportion is somewhat lower among rural boards (67%, v. 80% urban) and among the smaller boards (46%, v. 73% mid-sized and 100% larger).

The participants were also asked to rate the current effectiveness of their board at each of the following:

	Very Effective	Somewhat effective	Depends/ Not sure
Providing opportunities for teacher knowledge and skill development	73%	27%	-
Implementing / utilizing new teaching technologies	53%	47%	-
Ensuring that the hiring process is timely	59%	35%	
Providing teacher compensation that is competitive with other career choices.	29%	59%	6%
Providing on-boarding programs for new teachers	29%	24%	35%
Providing mentorship opportunities for new teachers	67%	27%	-

Three areas stand out among these results: (1) three-quarters of boards consider themselves very effective at providing knowledge and skill development opportunities; (2) only three in ten believe they are very effective at providing competitive compensation relative to other career choices – and this is even lower in rural boards (21%, v. 50% urban); and (3) on-boarding programs are not as well known as the other practices evaluated.

Other potential areas for improvement in a minority of boards include implementing new teaching technologies and ensuring that the hiring process is timely, which both are also reportedly done less effectively in urban boards.

Addressing the Challenge

Half (53%) of the participating school boards indicated that they have "special" programs or efforts in place to address teacher shortages, including: attending university career fairs (18%); mentorship programs (15%); bursaries (15%); subsidized housing (9%); relocation incentives (6%); and the use of advertising (6%). Mentorship programs and bursaries are mentioned somewhat more frequently by rural boards, while subsidized housing is more common for urban settings.

Few boards (10%) report success with efforts to entice mid-career switchers to teaching.

Looking forward, participants were also asked to rate the potential effectiveness of a range of approaches for addressing teacher recruitment and/or retention.

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Depends/ Not sure
Signing bonus	27%	38%	6%
Retention bonus (paid in year 4)	29%	32%	9%
Student loan repayment or forgiveness program	32%	50%	6%
Part-time teaching opportunities	12%	47%	3%
On-boarding programs for new teachers	27%	27%	32%
Well-organized and staffed mentor programs for starting teachers	74%	27%	-
Efforts to recruit mid-career changers to teaching	3%	38%	29%

Looking at the above results, the stand out favourite among these potential approaches is "well organized and staffed mentor programs for starting teachers."

Similarly, when asked which 2 or three of these possibilities would be the most effective way to address teacher recruitment and/or retention, mentoring (38%) and a student loan repayment program (32%) are the top choices, followed by retention (12%) and signing (9%) bonuses and part-time opportunities (6%). These results do not vary substantially by urban or rural setting.

New Teacher Supply

Participants were asked to compare the new teacher supply today compared to five years ago. One in five (18%) consider the new teacher supply the same as five years ago, one in ten (8%) consider it worse, and half (50%) consider it better. Another one-quarter (24%) say it depends. The perception that the new teacher supply is better today is more common among urban participants (70%) than rural (42%), and is least common among the smallest school boards (23%).

Teacher Training Programs

The belief that improvements to teacher training programs are required, was mentioned by about one in five participants, when prompted at the closing of the survey for any other comments. This impression is more prevalent among rural (25%) and small (31%) school boards.

Summary

Two main points are evident across these results:

1. Perceptions of the current situation and recruiting success vary by urban or rural location, with rural boards reporting less success, as do certain perceptions of current effectiveness – most notably in terms of the inability of rural boards to provide salaries that are competitive with other career choices.

2. The survey confirms that staffing for the following areas is among the most challenging for employers: math and science; second languages; and teachers of First Nations, Inuit or Metis descent; and special education.

TEACHER SURVEY

A random sample of 4,547 ATA members were invited to participate in this survey and 1,212 completed it between March 30 and April 13, 2010. The survey covered a range of topics related to teachers' experiences and the types of challenges they face, as well as their motivations and career satisfaction.

Motivations to become a teacher

The survey results indicate that most teachers became a teacher for one of five reasons, presented below, and that few were motivated by material aspects such as pay and benefits.

- Enjoy children – 30% – higher among women, teachers (compared to school leaders), and those who came to teaching at the beginning of their careers.
- Inspired by teacher(s) – 27% – higher among men, and those who came to teaching early in career
- Love teaching – 17% – decreases with years in the profession
- Teaching is important – 12% – higher among those who came to teaching mid career, men, and those who teach high school.
- Accidentally fell in to teaching – 9% – higher among those who came to teaching mid career, men, principals/VP
- Pay/benefits/perks – 1% – higher among those who came to teaching mid career

Incentives and Supports

The survey asked participating teachers and principals if a range of programs were in place when they were starting out as a teacher, and if so, how important it was for them in influencing their career path and choices. Participants were also asked how important they consider these same programs for new teachers starting out today.

The data in the following table suggest that, with the exception of part-time opportunities, the majority of current teachers and principals did not have access to the types of programs asked about. Nonetheless, three-quarters of participants believe that a mentorship program is very important for new teachers today, while six in ten feel that way about a student loan forgiveness or repayment program. Four in ten also feel strongly that working with less than a full load in the first year or two

is very important for new teachers today and nearly that proportion consider on- boarding programs very important for new teachers.

	In place when started: % Yes	Important for career choices: % very	Important for new teachers today:% Very
A mentor program for starting teachers	22	34	74
Student loan repayment or forgiveness program	17	30	61
Working the first year or two with less than a full workload	NA		43
An on-boarding program for new teachers	8	21	36
Signing / attraction allowance	14	16	35
Retention allowance	1	7	33
Part-time teaching opportunities	59	19	13

Part-time opportunities, while relatively available, are considered least important among these options.

Teacher Experiences

The survey included a series of questions to assess teacher and principal perceptions of how challenging teaching is as a career and how it compares with their expectations before they started in the profession.

When asked how difficult their first few years as a teacher were, about one third (33%) found this very difficult, and half (52%) say somewhat while just over one in ten (14%) found the first few years not very (12%) or not at all (2%) difficult. Teachers who entered the profession in mid-career (42%) more often found the first few years very difficult, compared to those who started at the beginning of their careers (31%).

Four in ten survey participants (43%), moreover, are finding teaching to be a very challenging career so far, while more than five in ten (55%) find it somewhat challenging and few (2%) find teaching not very or not at all challenging. Finding teaching to be very challenging is most common among teachers in the early part of their career (51% among those with 1-10 years experience).

About four in ten (43%) survey participants say teaching is as they expected it to be before they started, while nearly half (48%) do not feel this way. Moreover, when asked how teaching differs from their pre-career expectations, the workload is by far the most frequently cited difference, named by more than half of the teachers who find the profession differs from expectations (54%, or approximately one-quarter of all teachers).

Other differences between teacher expectations of the career and the reality of it include: lack of support or respect from parents (13%); student behaviour/attitude (11%); strain on family life/mental/physical health (9%); general lack of respect (9%); the diversity of student needs (9%); politics and bureaucracy (6%); and the lack of resources (6%). A host of other differences were also mentioned by smaller proportions of teachers.

Teachers were also asked if they expect teaching in their jurisdiction will improve or get worse over the coming three to five years, and more than half (55%) are expecting things to get worse. About one in five survey participants (22%) expect things to get better over the same period, while roughly the same proportion (18%) expect things to stay the same. Principals and VPs (32% get better) and others (e.g. resource teachers; 33%) are more optimistic than teachers (18%) about the future of teaching in their school jurisdictions.

Leaving the Profession

About one-third of survey participants (37%) have seriously considered leaving teaching, while another four in ten (39%) have thought about it but not seriously; and one in four (24%) have never considered leaving.

Among those who have seriously considered leaving (37% of surveyed teachers), one in three (35%) were considering leaving at the time of the survey, while four in ten (42%) were not and one in five (22%) were unsure.

Among those considering leaving now, four in ten are either very likely (9%) or somewhat likely (31%) to leave before the beginning of the next school year. One third of this group, however, are teachers with more than 25 years experience who are likely looking toward retirement.

Those who had considered leaving and did not were asked what go them through that period and the most frequent responses include: support from family, friends, and/or colleagues (25%); the pay, benefits, and job security of teaching (20%); a change of school or assignment (20%); the

students/kids (13%); a lack of alternatives (9%); a vacation (9%); making a difference (8%); loving teaching (6%); and perseverance/not wanting to quit (6%).

Nearly one in four survey participants (23%) do other paid work outside of teaching, predominantly less than 10 hours per week (55% do 5 hours or less and 42% do 6 to ten hours). Among those who take on additional work, six in ten say it is for financial reasons (62%). Other less frequent reasons for doing work outside teaching relate to hobbies/interests (18%); diversity of work environment/experience (12%); and professional development (12%). Many other reasons are mentioned but each by smaller proportions of teachers.

Career Satisfaction

Half of Alberta teachers and principals (52%) are "very satisfied with teaching as a career", and 42% are somewhat satisfied.

Satisfaction increases with years in the profession, and is higher among Principals/VPs (68%), and other speciality teachers (61%, compared to 46% of teachers), suggesting that "advancement" contributes to satisfaction.

Survey participants were asked why they rated their career satisfaction as they had, and the most frequently mentioned positive and negative responses are presented in the following table.

Reasons for Career Satisfaction	
Positive	**Negative**
Enjoy colleagues/staff 19%	Workload 12%
Love the job 18%	Underfunded/lack resources 5%
Good School / Assignment 11%	Lack of support/respect 2%
Personal/career/professional growth 9%	Strain on mental/physical health / family 2%
Enjoy my subject/grade 9%	Class sizes are too large 2%
Good support from Admin 8%	Education lost meaning/become business 2%
Job is important/make a difference 7%	Lack of admin support 2%
Challenge 7%	Student behaviour/attitude 2%
Good salary/perks 6%	Politics / bureaucracy 1%
Professional development 5%	

The survey included a number of other questions to identify additional correlates of career satisfaction. Detailed analysis suggests that teachers' thinking about their careers is structured in terms of the categories presented in the following table.[1]

The table also indicates the proportion of participating teachers and principals that gave the most positive response for each attribute (e.g. "strongly agree", "definitely" or "fully").

Work Environment	Leadership Support	Work-Life Balance	Efficacy	Pay and Benefits	Career / Development
Work is fun and interesting (48%)	Feel supported by my school leadership (51%)	Satisfaction with work-life balance (15%)	Able to get through to the most difficult students (16%)	Teaching pays well (10%)	Changing jobs periodically good for career (21%)
Make a difference through my work (55%)	Feel inspired and motivated by my school leadership (37%)	Have too much work all the time (30%)		Salary and benefits package fair (44%)	Value opportunities for growth over predictability (29%)
Work environment is fulfilling (32%)	Have sufficient input into school decision-making (38%)	Work fits with rest of my life (29%)		Teachers have great benefits (22%)	Advancement should be based on merit (27%)
Love teaching, but hate my current job (2%)	Receive needed support in terms of student discipline (49%)				Opportunity to learn through employer supported training/courses (52%)
In control of my career (26%)					Could easily find a job outside of teaching (14%)
Teaching is an attractive career (17%)					Professional development and career development aspirations being met (39%)
Learn new things on the job (82%)					
Am rewarded based on my performance (6%)					

[1] The groupings are based on a principal components (factor) analysis using varimax rotation. The order of presentation of attributes within categories reflects the relative strength of the inter-correlation of the items with others in the category (the factor "loadings").

Further analysis reveals that the three most important drivers of overall teacher and principal career satisfaction relate to their work environments, leadership support, and work-life balance. Also related, but less strongly, are instructional efficacy and pay and benefits. When the full range of considerations are included in the equation, the career / development attributes do not appear to influence teacher and principals overall career satisfaction.[2]

Potential Changes to Improve Teaching Life

Survey participants were also asked what two or three changes would most improve their day to day teaching lives and time, smaller classes, and a reduced workload are the most common suggestions.

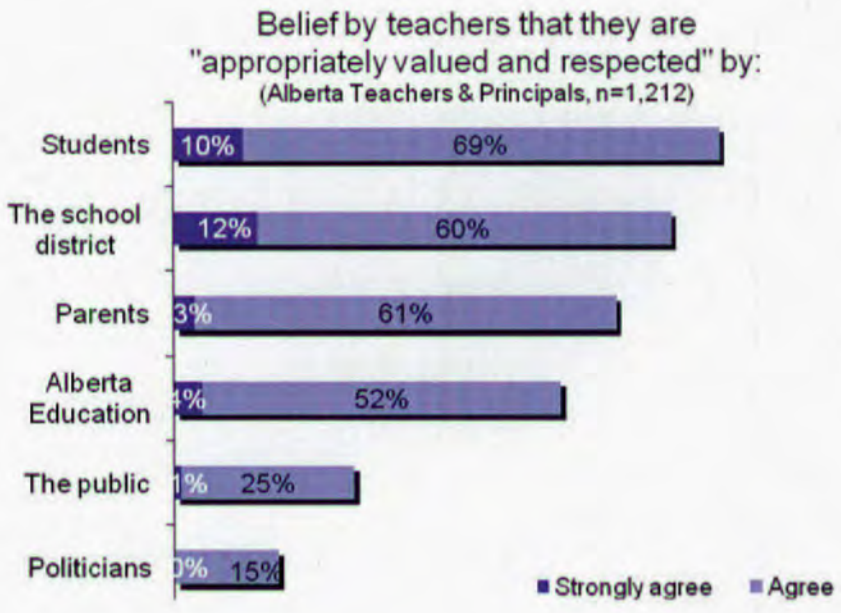
Changes that would most improve teaching life	
Time • To prep / plan / for patent contact • To collaborate with colleagues • More time (general)	 29% 12% 5%
Smaller class size Decrease workload Fewer expectations/demands	24% 18% 4%
Increase support for struggling / special needs students	14%
Better funding for resources and technology More/better resources Larger/better facilities / classrooms	11% 6% 3%
More PD opps (not on own time/cost) Improved technology / knowledge	10% 7%
More learning assistants / class room support	9%
Leadership • Admin Support • Better support re-discipline • Better leadership (principal/assistant principal	 5% 5% 5%

[2] This analysis was based on a series of linear (OLS) regression analyses, using overall career satisfaction as the dependent variable and the other attributes as potential driver (independent) variables. Several iterations were run to identify the key drivers.

Feeling Valued and Respected

Survey participants were asked if they believe teachers to be appropriately valued and respected by a number of key constituencies: students, parents, the public, school district, Alberta Education, and politicians.

The results, depicted in the following graphic, suggest that Alberta's teachers are not feeling valued and respected.



Summary

The following are key learnings from this survey.

- Half of Alberta teachers are very satisfied, overall, with their careers. The three most important drivers of overall career satisfaction are issues related to the work environment, support from school leadership, and work-life balance – all areas that are not fully satisfactory for many teachers.
- Most teachers find the first few years of their career to be at least somewhat difficult, including one in three who found these years to be very difficult.
- Teaching is a challenging career, many find the profession more challenging than they expected it to be, and nearly four in ten have seriously considered leaving.

- Programs to assist new teachers make the transition into the profession are seen as very important for new teachers starting out: mentorship programs; working with less than a full load in the first year; and on-boarding programs, for example.
- Many teachers do not feel appropriately valued and respected by key stakeholders in the education system, ranging from students, parents and the public, to the school board, Alberta Education, and politicians.

PUBLIC SURVEY

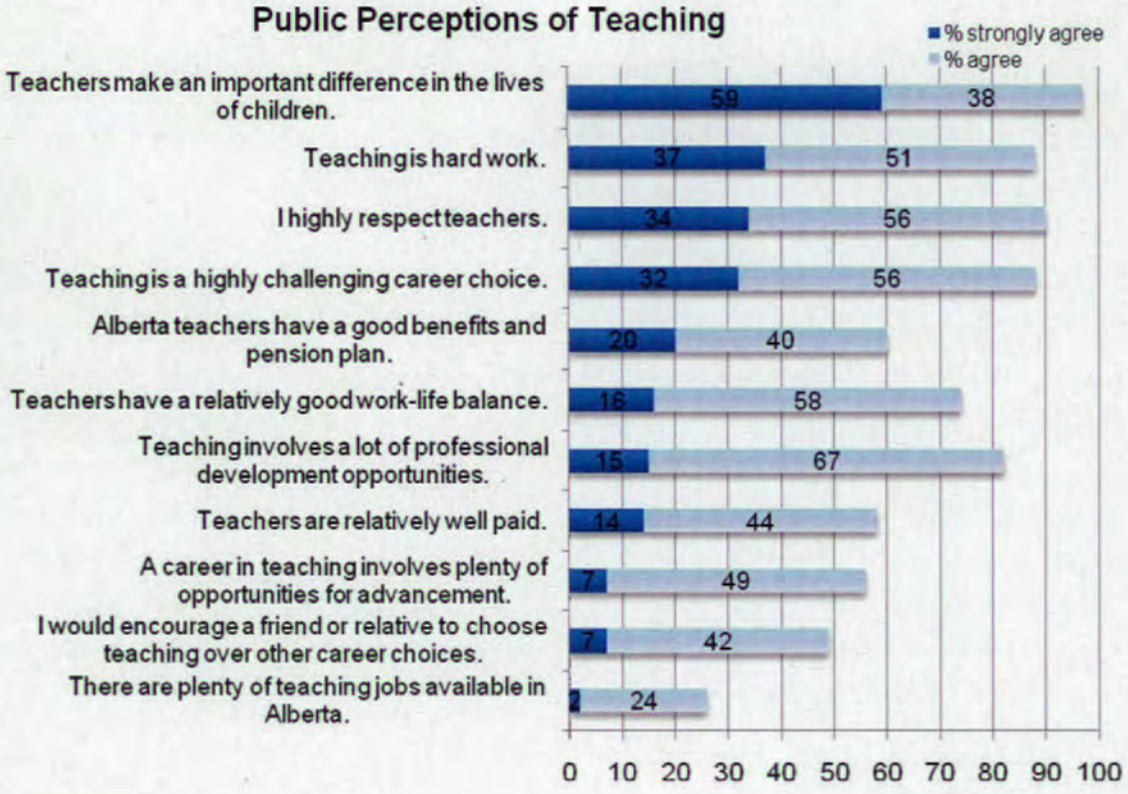
In order to obtain the public perspective on the teaching profession, a representative sample of 1,000 adult Albertans were surveyed, by telephone, between April 22 and May 2, 2010. A survey sample of this size is accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percent at the 95% confidence level.

This survey began with an overall question about public perceptions of the quality of Alberta's K-12 education system. Views on the system are somewhat mixed, with about half of Albertans considering the quality of the K-12 system as excellent (6%) or good (43%), about three in ten (30%) saying it is adequate, and just over one in ten saying the system is poor (11%) or very poor (2%).

Next Albertans were asked about their overall impressions of teachers. Nearly six in ten Albertans have either a very positive (9%) or positive (47%) impression of teachers, compared to only one in ten who have a negative (9%) or very negative (1%) impression. The remaining one-third of Albertans are either neutral in their assessment (30%) or didn't answer the question either way (5% don't know or no answer).

As demonstrated in the following graphic (on the next page), the survey also reveals the following points:

- Teachers are recognized for making an important difference in the lives of children, and teaching is recognized as hard work and a challenging career.
- Many in the population respect teachers for the work they do.
- But, teaching is not generally as well recognized as being a relatively well paid occupation, for having a good benefits and pension plan, providing work-life balance, or providing professional development or advancement opportunities.
- Few believe there to be plenty of teaching jobs available in Alberta.



Summary

- Few members of the public have a negative overall perception of teachers, and many recognize that teaching is a challenging career and that teachers make an important difference in the lives of children.
- But, teaching is not generally as well recognized for having good pay and benefits, or for providing a good work-life balance.
- Few believe there to be plenty of teaching jobs available in Alberta.

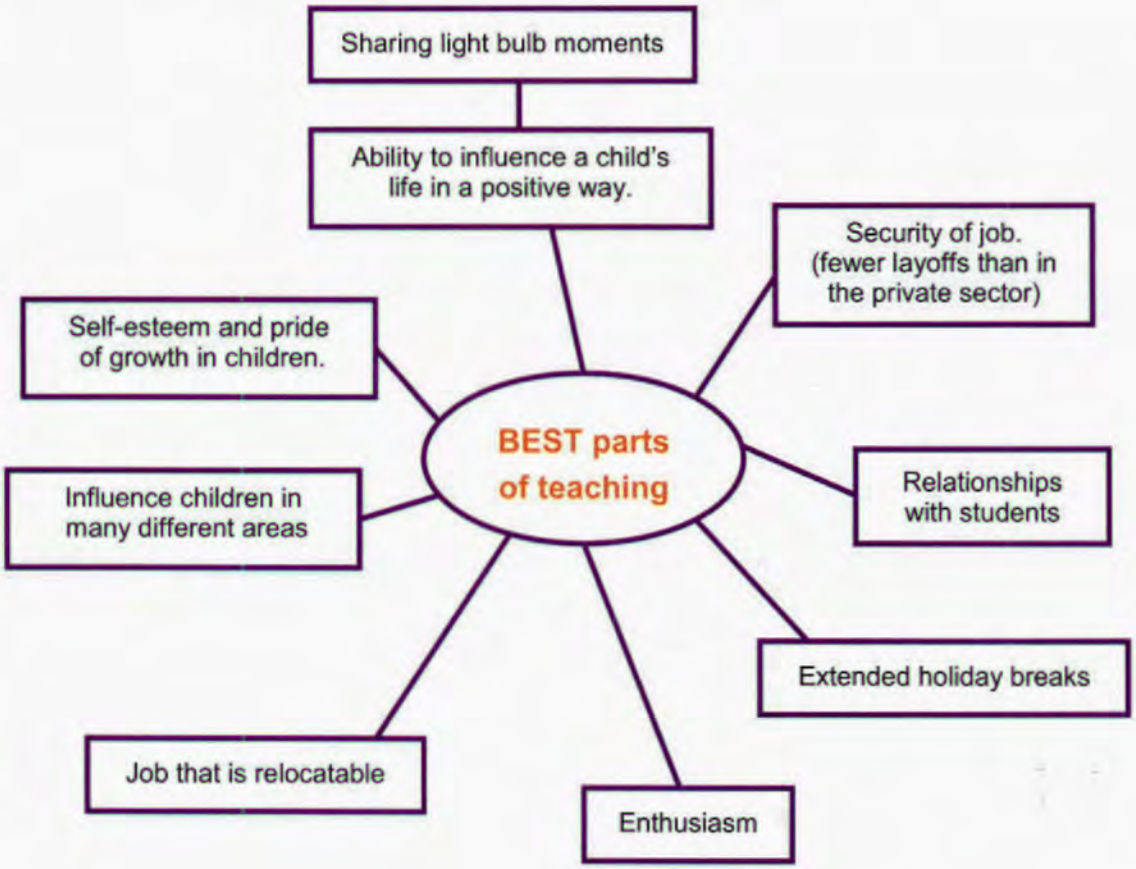
PARENT COUNCIL FORUMS

The three parent council dialogic research sessions that were conducted uncovered a number of issues that were consistent with the other research approaches. The following key issues resonated most strongly.

The Best and Worst Parts of Teaching

Parent council members have very personal relationships with the schools. Many of them are current or former educators, and understand the importance of the parent council.

With their intimate and personal knowledge of the local school, parent councils have a very interesting – and accurate – perspective on the best and worst aspects of teaching. The following charts were developed by a parent council in Grande Prairie, and validated in the discussions with the other parent councils:


Sharing light bulb moments
Ability to influence a child's life in a positive way.
Security of job. (fewer layoffs than in the private sector)
Self-esteem and pride of growth in children.
BEST parts of teaching
Influence children in many different areas
Relationships with students
Extended holiday breaks
Job that is relocatable
Enthusiasm

The intimacy of teaching

Both teachers and parents see teaching through the frame of an intimate relationship between the teacher and their child. Teaching is about relationships and moments of connection, "when the lights go on."

The current, complex classroom environment is seen as straining or constraining this relationship, detracting from teachers' ability to get to know all kids and, therefore, teach them.

This creates tension between numbers in the classroom, individual program requirements, paperwork, etc., and "teaching" as defined by these intimate relationships and moments of connection.

Complexity in the classroom undermines teachers' ability to build strong and individual relationships with students and that impacts their perception of job success and their job satisfaction.

The skill of teaching

The skill of teaching and the profession of teaching may be disconnected. Parents and students find it difficult to define or identify the professional skill of teaching. Teachers define this skill as a challenge of problem-solving, persevering, and finding out how to teach/reach each child. The real skill of a teacher is not "teaching" as much as about getting learning to happen. Finding ways to help individuals learn.

Teaching is recognized as hard work, but people outside of the teaching profession do not understand what the work really looks like.

Teaching as a vocation

There is a strong belief among parents (and in the general public) that teaching is a calling or vocation, and that a strong part of this calling is about the nurturing of children.

This notion that teaching is a calling may be limiting and restricting, and likely forms a part of the group identity challenge (us and them) between educators and non-educators. Someone who loves science and wants to share the subject, for example, won't be part of the "calling" group.

This notion that teaching is a vocation also potentially limits the appeal of the profession for those who don't think they have the calling.

INSIGHTS FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

This section presents the learning and insights from the in-depth interviews, organized into thematic areas. Selected, representative quotes, which illustrate the points, are presented in blue font.

The workforce challenge is important, but not urgent.

A lot of jurisdictions do not believe there is a significant attraction or retention issue. The rural ones do, but many others think they will be just fine.

> We are small urban jurisdiction in a part of Alberta where people tend to want to be and when they get teaching jobs they want to stay. We have relative small turnover. So recruitment is not difficult. We post ads and can fill anything we want to fill, and we get lots of unsolicited applications. It was briefly for a time difficult to get French Immersion teachers. And now we are getting our own French Immersion grads seeking jobs with us. We have generated our own supply. It seems to me the various forecasts that talk about teacher shortages don't seem to hit home to us in the way they are anticipated. That opinion is shared by our superintendent. We just haven't gone through shortages. In the future it won't be a lot different. We have a lot of staff stay here and finish their careers here. Through attrition we do take on new staff. There will be turnover but we will be able to replace.

> I know how important it is to have teachers who are well trained and kept current. In our small communities, away from the major cities, we have to do everything to make sure the children are getting the same quality of education in any other community.

> So let's not be surprised that teachers don't want to go to Loon Lake or Wabusca. Canada has become one of the most quickly urbanized nations in the world. So it makes it difficult to recruit if you are in rural AB and it makes it more difficult to recruit in more isolated communities. The teachers are not that strong in isolated communities.

Attrition is somewhat downplayed

Attrition is difficult to measure, and there is a significant amount of debate in the literature as to exactly how attrition should be defined and measured.

In Alberta, early career (non-maternity) attrition appears to be significant:

- 16% attrition in the first year
- 28% total attrition in the first four years.

By comparison, the Ontario Teachers Federation found that 10% of Ontario teachers leave the profession in the first five years, compared to 20% of US teachers (Clark & Antonelli, 2009).

The early career attrition in Alberta is explained away as natural attrition – people leaving the profession for reasons beyond job satisfaction, such as parenting, spousal career re-location, or teaching not the right profession for the individual.

A frequent explanation for why some people leave teaching while others stay with the profession is that not everyone is "cut out" for it.

> We have about 1% - 2 or 3 teachers that probably realize they made the wrong decision, and now they feel trapped, as a result, where do you go now with a Bachelor of Education? If they are not happy, the kids in the classroom are not happy either. We have to counsel people out of the profession better too.

> It is a highly intensive stressful job... its hard to explain that ... you have to be on your game every day. Some people have a capacity to do that over a long term and some don't...

> Jobs are harder than people anticipate when starting education programs at university. You deal with complicated, multiple relationships, parents, students, colleagues. Some realize they don't want to deal with all the pressure and leave.

Young teachers report much more unhealthy attrition from their peers:

> I know other people are not teaching anymore, my team teacher is not teaching any more either. I do know of three or four other teachers who started the same year as me that are not teaching anymore.

Unfortunately, it was very difficult to find individuals who had left the profession prematurely. However, we did interview a few, and they report very vivid experiences. This is one person's story:

> I always wanted to be a teacher, after getting my undergraduate degree in psychology, got an after degree in education. I taught for three years. When I was in an actual classroom, I taught grade 6 and also grades four and five.

> My mom is a teacher, so I spent some time in the classroom with her growing up. I guess I was always in summer jobs where I was working with kids, it was always something I wanted to do.

> My first year I was substitute teaching and I remember feeling really lonely that year, in and out of schools and I didn't know anybody. I just dreamed of having my own classroom.

The best parts were when students came back and visited and would tell you how much they enjoyed you as a teacher and when parents would tell you how much the kid enjoyed the class. And when you planned a really good lesson that went really well and the kids were excited about learning.

The hardest days were long, going to work in the dark, feeling like you can never get all your work done. I had a situation where I felt like the administrative staff, a new vice principal and principal, were picking on people. I felt bullied, like I was in elementary school and being picked on and there was nothing I could do about it. That was the main thing, the other thing was that the school would take on new initiatives and priorities, kept piling things on your plate and never took away things. I worked all night and it was never good enough. The work was not for teaching, it was reports and committees. I felt what I loved, teaching the kids, was not what I was really doing. Teaching took a back burner. That was really frustrating.

It was in my second full year of teaching that I first thought about quitting, I applied to go back to school to get my education psychology degree. I was looking to stay in the system and get out of the classroom. I left at Christmas that year, I didn't make it through the whole year. Unfortunately, I don't have psychological issues, but I was having a break down, I was exhausted, my marriage was falling apart, my husband didn't like the person I was, I was so unhappy, I thought, I can be miserable or do something about it. I had hoped to finish the year and transfer schools, but I couldn't make it through the year. I never give up, but I had to, I wasn't healthy anymore.

It was report cards that pushed me over the edge. We had a new principal, and she had a new way. I spent 50 + hours on the report cards. I was called into the office and told it was not good enough and that I had to redo them. I probably would have lasted that year, but this was my breaking point. The year before I was told that my report cards were amazing. There was nothing I felt I could do to please this person.

The kids, I miss them terribly. I miss the teaching, I loved teaching, I really miss it, and I miss the classroom. That is such a small part of teaching, it is like 10% of the job. The rest is outside the classroom.

Teaching was my identity, I feel like I lost my identity as a person. When you teach, it is your life, it is all encompassing, I feel lost sometimes. I am just doing admin work. I say I used to be a teacher, but now I do this, trying to figure out what to do next.

Early career attrition

There is a statistic that a lot of teachers don't stay in the profession after 5 years, I think that scares me. To get into a profession like that, I want to love and enjoy it for many years, see the kids that I have graduate. That would be a goal of mine and to know that a lot of teachers are getting burnt out, I think that is scary. I was a

> competitive gymnast, I played rugby for 7 years, and I'd like to stick with it. 5 years, you are just starting off, you haven't even nailed down your lessons plans, what works best you are still learning.

> Looking at why people leave. When people self-select out, because they don't want to do it anymore, not cut out for it, it may be good. But we need to understand the problem before we can solve it. But those who cannot articulate why they are not cut out for it… maybe it's the environment, assignment, etc. and then maybe there are things that can be done. When we focus too much on the economic side, we get to the "too many people leaving or not teaching". But if people self-select out and go onto to contribute elsewhere its okay. But if people don't feel good about leaving, then we have to understand why. Work is needed to understand the reasons for leaving…

There is a need for a disciplined province-wide study on why people leave the profession.

School leadership

School leadership (Strategic Action #10) is seen to be essential to teacher retention and recruitment.

> The principal is the focus, it has to do an outstanding job to get ahead. The principalship is more difficult, to get a good one, more so than the math and a science at the high school level.

> Support from school leaders is really important … I don't think principals realize how important it is … teachers need to feel connected to someone who provides stability, leadership and support.

> Support from school leaders is very important to the culture of the school and how teachers think about their careers and talk about their positions – a pilgrimage or mission versus a job versus feeling used and abused.

> My relationship with admin is not as supportive as I expected. With admin as well as some senior teachers, I think they forgot what it was like at the beginning or didn't care.

Team building in schools is also mentioned as an important element of retention. New teachers benefit from having a supportive network of teachers to help them deal with new issues.

> Support is important – teachers want to feel that there is a team around to help them succeed. They tend to stay if they feel supported, nurtured, developed over time.

Yet the current state of school leadership may not be good enough:

- 51% overall feel definitely well supported by their school leadership, and
- 37% definitely feel motivated and inspired by their school leadership.

Management versus leadership

A school leader has two core roles: management (budgets, facilities, reporting) and leadership (building a learning community, inspiring staff).

The qualitative research interviews indicated there is a perception that school administration are focused on budgets rather than teacher support.

> Principals are accountants, paper creators with three year plans, annual education reports, they don't have time, and many do not have the inclination to sit down with that kid fresh out of school, why don't you try this and why don't you try this. I went through this crap and sucked it up, why can't they? Lack of life experience and lack of support from above.

> I think that we need to practice what we preach. We spend all day talking to students about relationships and how to have good relationships. Sometimes we don't do that with other adults. Building a team in a school is fundamental. We have to be working together, not separate in our own classroom world. There is defiantly that. Second of all, administrators and teacher, there seems to be different priorities for teachers and admin and sometimes they don't meet our needs. They are more worried about money and budget, than teachers and students.

Teachers express concern that there is a conflict between evaluation and support. They are reluctant to seek support from the individual who is evaluating them.

> Teachers need a lot of support at the beginning of their career. They should not be evaluated by their administrators. There is too much friction there, and not enough of okay where are you developing as a teacher.

Effective recruitment and retention strategies

The interviews with leaders – both in school and in the divisions – indicated that there are a number of current strategies that are effective:

Word-of-mouth recruiting

> We have also found, if you want to hire new young teachers out of college, word of mouth is the best way. Teachers in our system will bring them to us. Get out teachers to advertise our school and division.

> In our recruitments, we will send a team out the U of NB, we send a teacher and principal out to do it. That has worked fairly well for us. The best way to sell a division is in the people.

I think if teachers who are really interesting people can talk about it that will attract people. There are some really exciting things going on there. We need to highlight that. I have visited schools that are really tuned in to me. They are really motivating to the children and teachers.

Local teacher education – where teachers are trained closer to their home communities

If more teacher education can be available in smaller communities, we are more likely to keep people in those communities.

The other thing, if we want people in the northern part of the province, until you get people in the North getting their degrees, people from other places will not be successful. We just have to focus on educating the people in the north. Métis, Natives – so they can be the leaders. Take the education to them. For a lot of people going to university is stressful, bring the education to them.

There is a project in Lloydminster where a cohort of students is on site there, rather than attending U of C. Almost without exception those students want to stay in their community – to stay in Lloyd. They have strong motivation for that. And if they went to Calgary they might not go back.

Well-organized and staffed mentor programs for starting teachers are clearly seen to have the most potential for success

Chinook's Edge is doing really good work. And there are other districts that do. They are very concerned to help their teachers. Not just to have a mentor teacher, but trained mentor teachers. And to get the beginning teachers together. To have real support, and that administration is reminded what it is like to be a beginning teacher. It can be a very sink or swim profession.

In addition to mentoring, other strategies are required easing the entry of teachers into the classroom. These specifically include:

A reduced work load in the first few years

We should create a system where a beginning teacher would be paid full time, but be given a .8 assignment. Just given more time. Maybe someone else's course to teach. We would never expect a doctor, or lawyer to hit the ground running, without their one year prep.

Another thing we do is that schools still tend to give the worst assignments to the beginning teachers. There is pecking order, and teachers who have been around a long time don't get split classes. They won't get the ones with the most special needs. So here comes the 22 year old teacher from out of province, and they get hit with loads that are far too large.

My solution is the internship program (done in the 80's). They allowed teachers to begin teaching. They were paid a lesser rate but we given lesser responsibilities. Like an articling student in a law program. Allows young teachers to transition without being hit by the entire load.

On-boarding (well-organized and implemented orientation/induction programs)

New teachers are invited to an orientation in August and are paid for the two weeks. We work through what is that makes the school distinct and help them fit into that. Every new teacher has a coach who spends time with them, provides feedback, guidance, advice… Coordinator finds 2-3 times each year to help new teachers, provide supports, etc… Keep instructional load for school administrators low, so they can spend time.

Starting teachers on the right track by introducing them to the district the right way, goes a long way to keeping teachers in the district. Mentors are carefully screened, and are a valuable asset to the district. New teachers love to have someone to talk to who is not the one evaluating them…

Other suggestions include:

Broadening the definition of who can become a teacher

I think we need to change how we hire teachers. I don't necessarily need to have an education degree. I personally wouldn't tackle a plumbing problem myself, let's have someone who understands come in and teach it.

Holding career fairs for high school students

I think career expo at the high school level, getting out to young people in grade 11 or 12 and talking about teaching as a career. That would be one.

IF a teacher is recognized as a good teacher by students and staff, then they could be a good spokesperson for the profession

Getting teachers back into the classroom. Confidence/ efficacy may play an important role in encouraging people to come back after a period on leave.

If you are away for a while, you feel you are not part. It would be very easy to lose your confidence. And it is very demanding work. The erosion of confidence could be a huge barrier to getting back.

Mid-career

There are mixed review of teachers who enter the profession mid-career:

> I have seen more teachers 40 plus, I have fired more of those than any other teachers. They are attractive in a way, but the vast majority have a hard time integrating into the system after they are forty. They have kind of a set preconceive notion of what the classroom should look like based on their personal experience as parents, and they have a devil of a time making that transition. A younger person doesn't have that other reference. It could be as simple as how to go out for recess. Last year we had a sub who would stand inside and look out the window. He would tell you all the reasons he did not have to be out there.

> We have a few teachers who enter late and are very successful, but I have fired very many. With the age, and someone is new, my antenna are way up there. I need very strong references. I am very skeptical. And I know research says very clearly we should be doing more. Because we bring maturity. I am speaking for myself here.

Beware secondment

If a jurisdiction is having challenges with their workforce, secondment can make the problem worse:

> And because we are in Edmonton, every year we have requests for secondment. We have 8 or 9 people. It means we have to find someone and the department will keep them for one to many years. They only tell you one year at a time. They have been better for the last few years. We lost a physics teacher on Aug 29 and that very next term marks plummeted in the school.

Recruiting special needs teachers

There are two divergent perspectives on the particular motivation to become a special-needs teachers.

Some administrators, among others, reject the notion that there are certain "kinds" of people that go into the more challenging areas of teaching,

> I believe a teacher is a teacher. A good teacher worries less about curriculum, and more about children. Our special education teachers teach children, not curriculum. Good teachers, teach child first, curriculum second.

Others describe some people being drawn to these areas, perhaps due to socialization or personality characteristics.

> Special education is like a calling, these are people who are committed and want to make a difference…

> I think it is personal life experience that creates an affinity… also a sense of doing social justice.

> Almost like something that people themselves have to know about themselves, that they can handle that end of the spectrum. Some teachers are naturally good at this.

There is something about the personality type or character that seems to connect… they see the world in grey rather than black and white, they approach the world with a lot of empathy.

But the students clearly see if they are one of those "kinds" of people, or not.

Not really. I see myself being a person that would get frustrated in that situation. With myself, sometimes it is hard to see the impact you are having and becomes harder in those situations. I could see myself being harder on myself and burning out. I see myself starting in a regular classroom.

No I not. I would not go to a reservation or a class specifically with students with autism spectrum disorder because I don't think I would excel in this environment.

I didn't because I didn't want to be focus on that for my career. I am open to working with special needs and ESL, it was not something I wanted to focus on for my entire career.

I wouldn't be opposed to trying it out, it is not something that I am going to seek, but if the opportunity comes to me, and everything falls into place, I wouldn't be opposed to trying it, but I wouldn't' seek it out.

Referring back to the social values analysis presented on page 8 of this report, there may be key values-based motivations that shape a willingness to work in these areas.

I think the people who go into working with marginalized people are more interested in social justice. It would be those kinds of motivation. For teachers going into special Ed it is a different kind of interest. With special needs you are looking more at individual children and what is that special need of that child. You are focusing on individual children.

Teaching in a rural community

Finding teachers for rural communities will be the area of most critical need over the next 3 – 5 years. As a shortage of teachers becomes a significant issue, urban boards will be able to draw teachers from rural jurisdictions with relative ease. This will place significant more pressure on rural board.

There are benefits of being a teacher in rural Alberta that are not always well considered or well marketed:

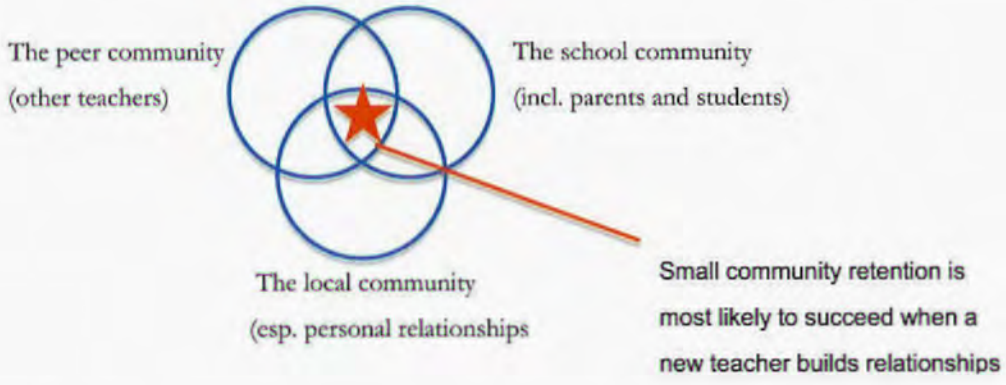
- Intimacy

  I think that is what draws me to rural Alberta, schools are smaller and more intimate.

- Opportunity

  When you are in a small community there are probably opportunities that arrive more quickly than if you in a city.

Teacher retention is a community-building challenge in three distinct communities: the school community; the peer community; and the urban/rural community. Particularly in smaller towns, teachers need to form strong relationships in at least two, if not all three, of these distinct communities.


The peer community
(other teachers)
The school community
(incl. parents and students)
The local community
(esp. personal relationships
Small community retention is most likely to succeed when a new teacher builds relationships

It is essential in small communities that new, young teaching professionals find a way to "belong" within the first few of years.

> Often when we hire staff, we hire single people. Their staying there is dependent on whether or not they meet someone that they are going to marry and live in the community with.

There is a further concern that rural communities may not value education as much as urban communities, and that this is part of the recruitment and retention challenge.

> And education is not valued. If parents don't value education, it is very difficult for teachers and schools to make progress.

Finally, rural-based teachers report on an additional pressure of being well-known and often-seen in the community. This erodes the ability to get away from their life as a teacher.

> In a small community you never stop being a teacher. You see parents in the grocery store and they are talking to them. Being in a large city might have been better.

The Gender Challenge

Male enrolment in education continues to erode

Our own program has not quite 25% men. And very few in elementary. We are not attracting men as much in the last few years. Historically, the average has been around 2/3 women – but the percentage of men has gone down.

There may be increasing social pressure on men working with children.

I battle with that now. Is it okay for me (to hug)? Do I know which student it would not be okay for?

There are fewer and fewer teacher role models for men.

Very sad. I don't know what to do about that. Boy's need men to see and appreciate that boys learn and work differently. They need good male role models, until we get men to understand that money is not the prime thing. Men still think money is what they need, the need to provide for the family.

But the teaching in general I think it perpetuates it. If your role models as a student are that of female teachers. That becomes ingrained in the mind. Not unlike nursing. And if you grew up and most teaches were female, that is part of it.

Is how we teach boys part of the long-term issue?

Yet boys don't feel as comfortable in the classroom. They don't enjoy school in the same way that girls do. That is my experience as a teacher and as a parent. I have talked to my son, he would be a good teacher. "No way, I hated school." He didn't say he hated school when he was in school, but I know he didn't. His real life was outside of school. But for girls the social part is important, but they also enjoyed the stuff in schools. Are we designing classes that are more appealing to girls because we are mostly women teachers?

If we are not teaching boys in K – 12 the way they like to learn, you are not going to get many men wanting to become teachers.

Motivations to enter the teaching profession

The Teacher and Principal Survey indicated four primary reasons that people enter the profession:

- Enjoy children
- Inspired by teacher(s)
- Love teaching
- Teaching is important

The qualitative research validated all of these motivations, and uncovered three others:

Because I love my subject and I want to share it

> I don't think so. I think my draw to teaching is much more my passion in science and the enjoyment I get from sharing that passion, and seeing other people excited about and understanding science. That is the draw for me. And not necessarily any sort of specific need area.

> Well actually, I never thought I would end up in administration to be honest with you. I grew up loving athletics, became a phys Ed teacher.

I unintentionally discovered that I love teaching

> I originally enrolled in a Bachelor of Science degree specializing in forestry. Partly I was interested in science and I didn't want to be a teacher. After a year and a half I realized I was a square peg in round hole. I transferred to education and found I had found my niche. I finished off my B Ed and that is how I found to be there.

> I unintentionally discovered a love of teaching.

Responsibility to my community

> It was not so much a desire or a career decision, more of an obligation, responsibility. Hereditary responsibility and lineage. My grandfather was a chief, great grandfather was a chief, my father was to be chief, but the turnover in government policies, supplanted the traditional ways of organization. Inherited responsibility because of my family linage, trying to make a difference in my community.

While this last motivation is specific to the Aboriginal community, it may also apply to other cultural communities.

Teachers live for teachable moments

There was tremendous support and consistency about what provides the most satisfaction for a teacher, and that is those moments where they connect with the student in a meaningful way, at a level that is deeper than the content.

> Molding and inspiring youth. Those salient moments of "aha I get it." That is so rewarding. If you are a great teacher, you get amazing students.

Watching the children's' little learning lights go on and when they catch on its brilliant… a great experience…. so beautiful when the children understand, and when they don't it challenges me to help them and I just love that.

Energized by children

Many teachers get their energy from the children. This may be an important part of retention.

For me, it is all about the kids, the opportunity to work with kids, to be a positive role model, to have a positive impact. It is a lot of hard work, if someone is looking for an easy career this is not it. The kids drew me in and that is what will keep me here. I want to help them to grow and become good people.

It is like you get to see the best part of the kids every day, the learning, the interest, the interaction with the other kids. Parent's don't get that, how are they interacting with other kids, how are they getting the topics are talking about.

I have aspirations to get back into the school, that is where the energy is. We have a small school in our school division. Parent passed away, in a small school, I went and taught so the teachers could go to the funeral. It was the best half of a day I have had in 12 years.

Part of the teaching is understanding that you have to be prepared to give something back to the kids. Teachers that engage in the profession, coach, and run drama productions, they are available for the kids. Those teachers stay longer, they get their energy from the kids.

Relationships

Teachers really value having relationships with the children. This is seen to be essential to be able to get those "lights go on" moments with children. And this is also what is extremely highly valued by parents.

Long term, to have the relationship with the kids, if they enjoy coming and spending time with you, they will enjoy coming to school.

Making an impact, would probably be the biggest. I always thought it was neat, for my mom, her students would come back and say hi, you are your favorite teacher. My mom did make an impact and to have them come back is awesome.

One first thing, getting, making a rapport with students from day one, take the time to get to know them. Second thing is getting the parents involved and letting the parents know they are on the paths that educated the child. It is a combined thing. The third is to take time for yourself. Teachers are all the same, we want to have everything done, overachiever, forget to take time to ourselves.

I think the most attractive thing is the ability to create unique relationships and to be able to hopefully build those in an environment where you are exploring interesting things. Relationships with the students and with other teachers. Where I am there is a strong feeling of community that I didn't really feel working in industry. And I think that is something that is very attractive for me.

Balance

Teachers need balance in their lives to avoid burn-out. This can be exceptionally hard for early-career teachers.

The best advice I have been given? It's your career; it's not your life. Meaning at the end of the day, you have to go home and balance it with your personal life and you have to HAVE a personal life…you can get very caught up in it. It can become just as much work at home as it can in the day. It's about creating a balance. Good teachers are yes people. They get stuff done and do what they have to do. It's important to not forget about the rest.

We often have an expectation that teachers gave over their lives to their career. Young teachers are not as willing to do that.

They would tell you need to have a work-life balance, but they are telling you to do everything. As a new teacher you are trying to impress and make everyone happier. If you did what they said, work-life balance, you would get in trouble for not getting things done.

Compensation

Compensation is fair, but it is not the reason why people go into the profession.

To be honest, I never have really thought about it. I think it is reasonable. I am not sure how it compares to other careers. I have no idea how it compares. As far as a teacher's salary is, I am not complaining.

How does teacher compensation and benefits compare? I don't know, it is hard to say. Yes I could go elsewhere where it is higher, but will I enjoy it and have the satisfaction?

There were other places that I could have gone that I would have made more money, and had a job immediately available, but the fit didn't feel right.

And I was never one to be overly hung up on what I was making as long I was making a comfortable wage. And that is something that can be provided by the teaching profession. In some ways that's satisfactory and that is good enough for me.

De-motivations to enter the teaching profession

My mom is a teacher, my uncle is a teacher, my great aunt was president of the ATA. It's in my family. It was always a first choice.

Two key source of de-motivation were reported by teachers:

1. Teachers discourage teachers. Many students reported being discouraged, rather than encouraged, to enter the profession by the teachers they know.

In high school I didn't want to know what I wanted to do, I kind of thought of education, and I kind of didn't. Both of my parents were teachers and I didn't want to be like them.... When I was growing up, my parents told me not to be a teacher. They didn't push me in that direction.

Jokes aside, not to do it. I don't know. Because it wasn't one, it was both my parents said no, a lot of their friends are teachers and they said no.

I think the big thing, that we have touched on, the advice teachers are given. Student looking to become teachers. I can't think of one person who has said yes go into teaching. I went back to my high school to say hi to my favorite teacher and she said "really you want to be a teacher?"

We don't sell ourselves very well either, don't be a teacher. They work very hard and love everything they do. They are sad to be leaving the children when they retire. They talk about the hard work, not the satisfaction. That is a problem.

2. Academics discourage teachers. Teaching is seen as a less important career than academia or industry.

Absolutely. In fact, a professor of mine who was something of a mentor, said "really, are you sure you don't want to go to grad school?" I think that perception is there, and that a lot of the real shining starts academically

do get wooed by industry and by graduate school, and they get attracted to these institutions that seem to have a bit more status in academic circles, for whatever reason.

I still think that the profession of teaching is not given the high standing that it should be given. People look down on the professional rather than seeing it as a great profession. It is probably the ones, the ones that have the greatest amount of influence, people that go into university, there are not that many that want to be a teacher. Teaching is often see as a fall back profession.

I was talking to one of my colleagues who said a student came up to them and my anthropology professor said I was the best student he ever had and when I said I was going into education, he said what a waste.

This is of particular concern as the largest pool of potential new teachers in 3 – 5 years are in post-secondary education today.

Teacher Preparation

I think a lot of people come into education without a really clear understanding of what it means to be a teacher. They know what it is to be a student. That is big shift to move from thinking about being a student to being a teacher. What makes teaching appealing? We can ask teachers that. What makes the job appealing to you? But what keeps you engaged? What keeps you coming back? What keeps you excited? What do you really get up for in the morning? Loving kids is not enough.

I thought I was ready too, till I actually stepped into the classroom. I think we do think we are ready, and I think some of the institutions are doing a much better job.

Almost everyone agrees that practicums are absolutely essential to teacher preparation.

I did a small study around that question. Asking people how well prepared they were. The general answer is that it would not have mattered what they learned in their pre-service training to prepare them for the complexity of dealing with a group of students.

Any graduate from our institution, chances are they will be put into classroom with autistic kids, and kids who are ESL, that is the real difficulty. The diversity that requires so much management and skills. We are asking too much of beginning teachers. Support for that is very minimized by school boards. Some are recognizing the needs for mentoring and supports.

> What you learn from your courses makes no sense until you go into the classroom. You learn what it is to be a learner and be a teacher. I would just like to get paid for it now.

> The university focus on the theoretical constructs misses the marks. Teachers come out and see it is much different than I thought it would be. Not because they have the skills because it is different. I came out of university, I took a job for May-June, taught grade 4, I thought oh my god, I thought I was going to die, I was not prepared for that. It was so different. I truly believe that our practitioners have to be in the classrooms earlier and more often.

If there is a gap in the practicum experience for many teachers, it is the first two weeks of September. Many students do not receive a practicum during this period.

Quality of Teacher preparation

School authorities believe that teacher preparation programs could be improved.

> I have always struggled with teacher prep programs. Universities have not kept pace with the changes in education. A teacher coming in thinking they are going to stand and deliver in a classroom. 90% of all classrooms all have smart boards, involving the technology in it. In the average day, you will find 10 -20 classrooms connecting to world wide experts on you name it, on video conference. We send people out to train other people. We train Parks Canada on how to run video conferencing. Teachers coming out we expect that that will happen. It will take preparation to get teachers there. We developed a course a number of years ago, species at risk. The kids at high school choose to take it. Week one an expert on a fish population out of the Alaska panhandle. Then a cod expert out of Nova Scotia. An Inuit elder on climate change on polar bear population. Oh my gosh, what have I got myself into. It takes a lot of work to prepare for them. Why a teacher engages children, take an abstract concept and make it concrete. It is a field trip without leaving the school.

Teachers almost universally cite that they are least prepared for all of the non-teaching aspects of the classroom.

> When we go into education, we also have to worry about students' physical well-being, obesity, mental and emotional well being. Dealing with parents and agencies, networking as teachers we do. The amount of special education we all do, experience with writing IPP's. If someone goes into education thinking they are being just a teacher, that is not the case. All the different demands placed on them.

> For retaining and recruiting teachers, I think just at the college and university level, I think they need to get more input from teachers about what goes on in the classroom and what kinds of things the students should be

learning. I don't think they get a reality, they don't see what reality is like. I just think the universities could do a better job preparing students for what they need to look forward to.

You know, I had an insanely hard practicum teacher, the one who oversaw me in the classroom. She prepared me better than anyone else and I was still only 50% aware of what the job entailed. I would say it is unsatisfactory.

There is some indication that after-degree teachers are – on average – more committed, and better prepared

In terms of the faculty of education, some of our best students are our after degree students. They are usually our best students, and are usually the ones who are the most organized and work the hardest. Many of them are going to be superb teachers. They have already had four years of university. By the time they are willing to put money into another two years. And they are the ones that come with a shine on them. Some kind of sparkle. They are really keen to get into the classroom and teach. They are intrigued. Some of the people in their first degree, they are not as excited. We do notice that. It is a very clear difference.

University of Lethbridge specifically is highly admired for its teacher preparation. This is largely due to its Education 2500 Orientation to Teaching course, and its extensive practicum placements.

That is what the U of L is so great for, they have the 2500 class. One year in elementary, one year in High school. They have a longer practicum time, and more time in the classroom. The 2500 class is really great, counts towards my degree. I am in the classroom. So I can see if it is for me. It is an observation class, I am doing a little lesson on St. Patrick's day, so we are kind of practicing too. My teacher assistant and I sit and talk and discuss. We talk about teaching and techniques.

U of L provides us with the best first year teachers, they have an undergraduate degree already, then they come in and do the after degree, these kids know they want to be teachers first. They are a year older, more mature, have the liberal education. They run their practicums a little different.

I think that the teachers that I see that come from the U of L are really well prepared, they still have done a lot of good planning and classroom time that makes their expectations more reasonable.

The more practical semesters you can have are probably the best way to prepare you for teaching. I looked at the Ed programs for the U of C and the U of A, that whole semester of PS3 at the U of L made a huge difference. It made you feel like a first time teachers, it gave you the responsibilities of being a teacher.

Students want mentoring

Even though they have not yet entered the classroom, students are concerned that they may not receive the mentoring and support that they would need.

> The worry, my worry, the first few years of teaching is not having that support system that is so greatly needed. Some principals are great, and others are not. I am afraid I will be in a school that does not know how to support new teachers. That is the only fear I have.

> All jurisdiction will say they have induction programs, but what is needed is a staged entry… resource requirements to provide partial timetables at the outset, other supports – mentoring, availability of individuals who can be exemplary mentors – which in itself may require professional development – some kind of ongoing development programs to increase understanding and skill development (assessment, etc.)… The province should provide resources for programs to be developed… if people knew there would be a staged transition into the profession this would help with recruitment. Induction could help teachers and also dispel some of the negative baggage about how hard the first years are.

There were suggestions that mentoring should not to be restricted to other teaching professionals, but something that could be formally provided by the educational institutions.

> The University of California continues contact with their graduates for a year, the university provides that mentorship role, and they can go back and get help from their fellow students. Maybe the U of A should continue to support the students for a year, and that would give them an understanding on how well their programs were working.

The desire for certainty

Probationary contracts create a lot of stress about evaluation. And they create stress with administrators. It discourages young teachers from seeking help.

> Having to wait till the end of the school year, for contracts, I know why they do that, but it makes it really hard to make any plans.

> Some teachers might have had a contract at a school and might not find out till July if they are coming back and our school starts in August, how much prep work can you actually get done?

> The worst thing is the job security. When you are faced with you might not have a job next year, yet you still have to live, who knows where that would take you. I don't want to wait five years for all those people to be gone.

The current climate with worries about job cuts likely will increase early career attrition. New teachers might love the job, and want to be doing it, but they will leave if they don't think there will be a position for them.

Easing the first years

In addition to mentoring, other strategies have been recommended for easing the entry of teachers into the classroom.

Professional Development

> Our board invests significant sums in professional development – ***the road to student success is paved with staff learning***.

> My first reaction is professional development support… more than ever before the profession is faced with a different world in terms of the kids we are teaching… the connected generation… have to seriously change the structural model of education – the factory model of schools from the last century… students on conveyor belts, have to change all of this to adapt to the new kids from a different world… huge transition…

Part-time flexibility

> I think keeping opportunities for work flexible. So that women who come off maternity and want to work part time are allowed to do that. In our jurisdiction we don't require someone who had a fulltime contract and want to work part time, we don't require them to relinquish their fill time status. You can come back, job share for awhile and be full time later on. That accommodates people.

Placement

Placement is an important retention issue.

> Placement is important in terms of retention, but not in terms of recruitment. We don't have a ton of openings. It is easy to move from one school to another, and we solicit requests for transfer and we try to accommodate as much as possible. We invite teacher transfer.

Career development

While half of the teacher and principals surveyed feel they regularly have the opportunity to learn through training or courses with the support of their employer, six in ten teachers are not having their professional and career development aspirations fully met.

Early career teachers have the view that if you don't want to go into administration there is no room for advancement. These early career teachers perceive administration as being about is budgets and dollars, rather than about what they care about – teaching and learning. This lowers the appeal of administration as a path of advancement.

> I would say no, like, advancement is hard unless you are going to go into an administrative position. You can take on different roles within your school, but they are often voluntary roles, you can help out but not getting paid more. Advancement is an administrative position.

Teachers highly value school-level recognition of their contribution.

> Our teachers put in hundreds of hours doing the work in preparing the files for the system to look at. Our board said, we are going to give every teacher a $10 Tim's card, it did more to build morale. It recognized their work.

> Lack of appreciation from administration. I would say that is there primary one, the education bureaucrat, including principals, seems to have forgotten that money isn't everything, and teachers are paid well. But if your principal was to walk down the hall once a week, and said man I still like what you did last week instead of saying what you did wrong. You always seem to get it to you did a poor job. I think it is something we are genetically hard wired to do, lack of appreciate, and lack of support.

Being a teacher

Teaching is hard work

> If all that teachers had to do was teach, it would be perfect, but between meetings and paperwork, the ratio of teaching to other stuff is crazy. Teaching is minimal and you take so much home with you…late nights, prepping, that's a lot. Extra curricular stuff can be really rewarding too, like maybe you want to coach or you want to put on a production, then put that on top of it. There is too much stuff. It all adds up. Especially after a couple of years when you are doing this and prepping for multiple classes.

> It is a lot of work and it is high stress, but there are clear and established finish lines for those things. Whereas one of the things I didn't like about the 9 – 5 of industry, is it was lower level of stress, but a seemingly endless abyss of stress, rather than a sprint.

> But the workload intimidates me. I am afraid of not being able to keep up with that workload, and having the instruction and attention suffer as a result. And not being able to keep up with the high demand on time and energy, and I think too the emotional demand with those relationships that are built and the impacts those has on the teacher.

And teachers are looking for society to recognize that it is hard work:

> I think the worst thing is not getting the recognition outside of the teaching profession. How many hours and how much work it takes. And that we do not get paid for all the hours we put in.

The real skill of teaching

Becoming a learning profession

Are we looking for learning professionals, not teaching professionals?

> I would say teaching is a bit of a misnomer. You are talking about learning. You can teach until you are blue in the face, but the students are there to learn. They have to get better. Teachers have to continually learn to stay abreast of what it is they are required to do. Kids have changed and they are continuing to change. And teachers who don't want to change should consider requirement. Change is inevitable. And to teach as if the kids are like they were in 52, 62, 72, 82 or even 92 just won't cut it and it isn't acceptable any more.

Image of the Profession

Reputation and Respect

The concepts of reputation and respect seem to get a bit mixed up. The reputation of education in Alberta is strong, particularly on an international scale. But teachers are looking for more respect from key constituencies.

Reputation

The reputation of education in Alberta is good.

> I think it is fairly high, I know the Alberta education system is looked at world wide as an example, I think there are really good things about it, There is always room for improvement. But the overall reputation is really good.

Does the government value education?

The government is seen to send mixed messages about the importance of education

This is difficult. The government of Alberta sends mixed messages about education. They can be cutting back and cutting back, and saying education is important. Overall, the education system in Alberta is a good one. I don't think people really think about it though. It's something we think about.

I mean as far as for the work force, you have to draw them in with respect. It has to be a profession of respect, if it is not respected by government, society is not going to respect it. Teaching a profession, on par with doctors, responsible to the public.

When they become a politician in the open arena, they don't always give teachers the respect they need.

Respect

Teachers are respected, everyone understands how important they are, but not in that people don't know what they actually do and how much they do.

I think for the most part, parents do have respect for the teachers. I think for the most part, for the majority, looking at my school in general, most, if not all, parents respect teachers.

Do current parenting approaches undermine respect for the profession?

I think with the seeming cultural shift towards the importance of the individual over the importance of the institution, whatever the institution may be, that parents are trying to enable their children to be individuals from a very young age.

Positioning teaching

If we are going to promote teaching, we need to find a way to position it. One of the key aspects of teaching that seems to be important is the constant opportunity for growth and multiple career opportunities.

Challenge and opportunity

Do people need to keep their careers challenging, and seek new opportunities? A student thinks so...

I think you can always be challenged as a teacher, first of all you shouldn't teach the same grade for 20 years of your career, you get monotonous, you are not challenging yourself, and you get board, if you change grades every few years, you need to change. There are 13 grades you can teach, each has their challenges. If you teach all, you will never not be challenged. Try new things if you are in the same grade.

Teaching needs to be seen as a vibrant profession, with lots of opportunities.

Teaching is one of the old professions that people think they know a lot about. The challenge is to make it more exciting. It has to be seen as a vibrant, engaging profession. So many kids have sat in school and they don't want to be doing more of that right now.

I think we have to be able to put out a public image of teaching as a vibrant profession, a profession that is full of energy, ideas and opportunity. That is what most young people are wanting. They are not looking for a profession they are going to be in for the rest of their lives. That may be wrong to give out as an impression. I think we have to be able to find a public face that focuses on the wonderful opportunities and the vibrancy of the profession. It has to be a profession that people want to belong to. It shouldn't be hard to show that because it is there.

And a rewarding career…

Recruitment strategy should be about what rewards teaching brings to your life… revitalizing the great career that teaching is in people minds. Rewards of teaching: you have a job that is predictable in terms of time, what the year is going to look like. A job with challenges and rewards when you meet those challenges. Career advancement opportunities; a lifestyle that is stable; being compensated well overall and having a benefit package that increases your overall wellness – good teeth and health. Lifelong learning opportunities and career advancement opportunities. It is revitalizing because you are with young people. There is a mission quality to it because you have meaning and impact on peoples' lives. You have a relatively good position in society as a teacher – teachers are respected in society overall… well thought of and treated quite well overall… not outdoors in the cold in the winter, in good well maintained work environments and overall provided the tools we need to do our work. Opportunity for creativity.

Articulating what makes a great teacher.

We need to talk more openly about the characteristics of great teachers in venues where people are trying to make decisions about career plans. Not sure people have articulated the qualities of what makes great teachers.

Qualities of great teachers:

- Respect for the learner, integrity, compassion: caring about kids
- Understanding that the learner decides whether or not to learn, so the teacher role is to convince them that they want to... causing others to want to learn
- Understand children and where they are relative to learning… Some people adept at this, others not

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Important, but not urgent

The attraction and retention of teachers is seen to be important, but not necessarily urgent.

- There is not the sense of urgency in regions that the forecasting numbers would suggest should exist.
- There is a lot of acceptance of the status quo, and very year-to-year recruiting approaches.
- Budget constraints dramatically complicate long-term hiring strategies.

If there is a crisis bubbling, it is not currently acknowledged.

The fiscal and economic context

The current fiscal and economic context has created a few issues that will make attraction and retention more difficult.

Many school boards have responded to budget constraints by reducing the number of teaching positions in 2010/2011. Our research anticipates the following consequences:

- New students will be discouraged from entering teaching as there will be a perception that fewer jobs will be available. This will erode confidence in teaching as a sustainable career. For example, only 2% of the general public strongly agrees that there are plenty of teaching jobs available in Alberta (and only 24% agree).

- Teacher satisfaction seems to be connected, at least in part, to class size and complexity. This likely will get worse, which will lead to lower satisfaction and higher stress. This could increase attrition over the next few years.

- Belief that government values teaching will erode. While teachers hear positive and encouraging comments from the Minister, they use money as an indicator of the government's true support for education. Already very low, belief that government supports education will erode further.

- While teacher attraction and retention is seen to be important, it will be considered even less urgent until school boards have room to hire.

It will be very difficult for a recruitment campaign to be developed when government funding to school boards is seen to be directly responsible for fewer teaching positions. As well, it will be difficult to raise the profile of teaching as a profession, when government is seen to not support education.

(Note, we acknowledge that the public and teacher perspectives may not be fair, but they are what exist.)

Enabling strategic HR planning

The current economic uncertainty and education budget constraints have the potential to undermine certainty in the education system for a number of years. And it will be difficult for the government to re-establish confidence amongst emerging graduates that there will be a stable supply of jobs and opportunities.

One important tool to consider is through multi-year school division budget commitment, tied to actual enrolments. The current enrolment forecasting model can be used to develop the budget projections. This will bring greater attention to the forecasting model, and it will encourage school divisions to develop longer-term HR plans.

- Aligning teacher skills and interests with their jobs is important. And young teachers benefit from lots of exposure to different areas to identify what the "right areas" are for them.

Image of the Profession

While the *reputation* of education in Alberta is strong, particularly on an international scale, teachers are looking for more *respect* from key constituencies.

However, teachers are fairly well respected, everyone understands how important they are. The issue is that people do not understand is the actual job of teaching – what teachers actually do and how much they do.

Mixed messages from government

The government is seen to send mixed messages about the importance of education. While the Minister and the department have been speaking about the importance of education, and embarking on significant, visionary initiatives, the budget constraints are considered to be a truer measure of government support for education.

And as the survey of teachers and principals reveals, 0% of teachers strongly agree that they are appropriately valued and respected by politicians, and only 15% agree.

Focus on emotional attrition

Emotional attrition proceeds before physical attrition. Research and best practices indicate that retention efforts will only be successful if they reach teachers during the emotional phase of attrition:

Emotional attrition	Start the new job with enthusiasm.
	Question the decision to accept the job.
	Think seriously about quitting.
	Try to change things.
	Resolve to quit.
Physical attrition	Consider the cost of quitting.
	Passively seek another job.
	Prepare to actively seek.
	Actively seek.
	Get new job offer.
	Quit to accept new job, quit without a job, or stay and disengage

(Branham, 2005)

Increase collaboration in smaller regions

Resources and economies of scale make recruitment and retention in large, urban boards extremely different than the challenges faced by smaller school jurisdictions.

Collaborating to create larger "employment zones" would allow smaller jurisdictions to

- Provide more career opportunities within a rural environment
- Invest in out-of-market recruitment more consistently
- Make offers earlier to candidates

Positioning teaching

Recruitment strategy should be about what rewards teaching brings to your life.... revitalizing the great career that teaching is in people minds.

- Focus on the skills to enable learning – the aspect of teaching that most people do not understand,

- Demonstrate that teaching is full of diverse challenges, and
- Demonstrate that teaching is a vibrant profession, with lots of opportunities.

Reframe the recruitment and retention challenge

A better problem to solve may be to focus on attracting the best possible candidates, getting them high performing faster, keeping them engaged and learning longer. This will increase the engagement of high performing teachers across the province, and it also will increase the overall teaching supply.

NEXT STEPS

The **Action Report**, a separate summarizes the key learnings, and provides short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations for action.